

Remarks

Claims 1-4, 6-29, 31, and 32, are pending. With this Response, claims 6, 24, and 26, are amended and claims 1-4, 8, 10-23, and 27-29, are canceled. Upon entry of the current amendments, claims 6, 7, 9, 24, 25, 26, 31, and 32, remain pending.

Applicants submit that the claim amendments are fully supported by the application as originally filed and do not present new matter. Claims 6, 24, and 26 are merely amended to change claim dependency.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and further examination of the application in view of the remarks below.

Telephonic Interview

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the telephonic interview granted by Examiner Rutledge on January 6 and 7, 2008, with Applicants' undersigned representative, Paul J. Parins.

On January 6th, Mr. Parins requested clarification as to whether claim 21 was allowed since the Office Action Summary indicated that claim 21 was allowed, but paragraph one (1) of the Detailed Action did not indicate that claim 21 was allowed. Examiner Rutledge indicated that claim 21 should not have been indicated as allowed and that claim 21 was intended to be rejected under paragraph 3 of the Detailed Action.

On January 7th, Mr. Parins inquired as to whether Examiner Rutledge would object to amending claims to depend from allowed claims 9 and 31. Examiner Rutledge indicated that she would not object to such amendments.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants gratefully acknowledge claims 9, 31, and 32, as allowed. With this response, Applicants amend claim 6 to depend from claim 9 so that claims 6 and 7 now depend from claim 9. Also, Applicants amend claims 24 and 26 to depend from claim 31 so that claims 24, 25, and 26 now depend from claim 31.

Accordingly, claims 6, 7, 9, 24-26, 31, and 32, are allowed.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-4, 10-20, 22, and 29, stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sakai et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,168,665) in view of Sugawara et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,499,193) and Nguyen (U.S. Pat. No. 6,168,672).

It is respectfully submitted that the cancellation of claims 1-4, 10-22, and 29, render this rejection moot.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claims 1-4, 10-20, 22, and 29, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sakai et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,168,665) in view of Sugawara et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,499,193) and Nguyen (U.S. Pat. No. 6,168,672) be withdrawn.

Claims 6-8 and 22-26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sakai et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,168,665) in view of Sugawara et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,499,193) and Nguyen (U.S. Pat. No. 6,168,672) as applied above, and further in view of Fujimoto et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,391,111).

It is respectfully submitted that the cancellation of claims 8, 22, and 23, and the amendment so that claims 6 and 7 depend from allowed claim 9 and so that claims 24-26 depend from allowed claim 31 render this rejection moot.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claims 6-8 and 22-26 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sakai et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,168,665) in view of Sugawara et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,499,193) and Nguyen (U.S. Pat. No. 6,168,672) as applied above, and further in view of Fujimoto et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,391,111) be withdrawn.

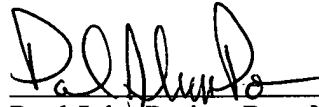
Conclusion

It is respectfully submitted that the claims and the present application are in condition for allowance. Approval of the application and allowance of the claims are earnestly solicited.

In the event that a phone conference between the Examiner and the Applicants' undersigned attorney would help resolve any remaining issues in the application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (651) 275-9831.

Respectfully Submitted,

By:



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